

'Desh ke Mentor' programme

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In news– The Directorate of Education (DoE), Delhi recently said that new features have been added to ensure the safety and security of children in the 'Desh Ke Mentor' programme introduced by the Delhi government.

What is the issue?

- **A complaint was received in the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) about the safety of children participating in the Desh Ke Mentor programme.**
- The commission alleged that the programme, as part of which students are provided career guidance by eminent citizens, **"exposes them to certain dangers"**, and asked the Delhi government to suspend the programme till the loopholes are "overhauled".
- In its written response to NCPCR, the DoE stated that **new features had been added to ensure the safety and security of children enrolled in the programme, including the police verification of mentors.**
- **A report of criminal record (if any) about a registered mentor would be obtained** from the police station concerned and in case of an adverse report, the mentor would be de-registered immediately.
- The department conveyed that all conversations between mentors and mentees will be recorded by the department.
- Additionally, the contact number of children/mentees shall not be disclosed or made available to the mentor or any other person.
- The DoE also issued a circular to all government schools directing that all parents are advised to ensure the presence of an adult family member during the conversation between the mentor and the mentee through the programme's app.

About the programme-

- It was **launched in October 2021** by the Delhi government.
- Under the programme, **nine lakh students of classes 9 to 12 in Delhi government schools** are connected with **noteworthy citizens** who will offer them **career and general guidance**.
- The programme includes a **two-month mandatory mentoring module** and another optional four-month module.
- The mentors will **engage with students over the phone for 10-15 minutes daily** to guide them on various aspects of life.
- **Interested citizens from across the country can become mentors** by registering on the Desh ke Mentors app created by a team at the Delhi Technological University, which will **connect students and mentors** based on how their profile and interests align.
- **Mentors from various professional and academic backgrounds, between the ages of 18-35, will guide and support 2-5 students** studying in Delhi government schools.
- They will help the students in their overall development and personality development by sharing their knowledge, skills and expertise in various fields.
- Actor Sonu Sood had been appointed as the brand ambassador for the programme.